United Nations S/2000/1230

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 December 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 21 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward the attached press release, issued on 20 December 2000, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on the decision made by the Government of Eritrea to release Ethiopian prisoners of war (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-81238 (E) 221200

Annex to the letter dated 21 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Press release

Ethiopian prisoners of war to be repatriated on Friday

The Government of Eritrea shall begin repatriating Ethiopian prisoners of war on Friday this week under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

As may be recalled, Eritrea had formally informed ICRC last September of its readiness to release Ethiopian prisoners of war in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the Geneva Conventions.

Moreover, the peace agreement signed in Algiers on 12 December between the two countries provides for the parties to "release and repatriate, without delay, all prisoners of war" (article 2.1).

Against this backdrop, discussions have been going on with ICRC on the actual modalities and logistical aspects of the repatriation of the Ethiopian prisoners of war. As a result, repatriation is now scheduled to start on Friday, 22 December.

Eritrea had unilaterally released and repatriated 71 Ethiopian prisoners of war during the early phase of the conflict.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Asmara
20 December 2000